

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Royal Gorge Field Office  
3028 E. Main Street  
Canon City, CO 81212

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-0047 CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Recreation – Mountain Bike SRP's in Salida North and Salida South

PLANNING UNIT: Arkansas River Sub region #1

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Colorado, Chaffee County, New Mexico Principle Meridian,  
T. 49 N., R. 9 E., Sec. 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, & 18.  
T. 49 N., R. 8 E., Sec. 13.  
T. 50 N., R. 9 E., Sec. 21, 27, 28, 32, 33 and 34.

APPLICANTS: Alison Peticolas, Adventure Unlimited; Brandon Slate, Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center RMOC; Jeff Berger, Boy Scouts of America; Kristy Falcon, Banana Belt Race

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is to issue Special Recreation Permits (SRP) to the above applicants for mountain bicycling activities. Adventure Unlimited requested additional guided mountain bike use on their current SRP. Boy Scouts of America and Banana Belt Race have applied for new SRP's. RMOC is renewing their SRP.

These activities would occur on BLM designated routes in Salida North and Salida South. Both areas (see attached maps 1 & 2) support trails designed and open to bicycle travel as defined by the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (TMP).

Compliance with the permit stipulations is required. All permitted activities will be monitored by the BLM for adherence to the stipulations. Use of BLM public land is non-exclusive; designated routes in the area will be open and available to the public unless a temporary closure is deemed necessary for public safety. If a temporary closure is necessary the BLM would follow the appropriate closure process and the permittee would be responsible for notifying the public through local news media and trail signs.

The Proposed Action would issue SRP's to the following outfitters as described:

#### **Commercial Applicants:**

**Adventure Unlimited AU** proposes to conduct commercial guided mountain biking tours for their youth summer camp programs. AU mountain biking would occur in June, July and August

in either Salida North or South. The Proposed Action would issue a multi-year permit due to their satisfactory compliance record over the past ten years. AU proposes 3 trips per year of use.

**Boy Scouts of America BSA** propose to conduct commercial guided mountain biking tours as part of their summer camp programs. BSA activities would occur in June, July and August in Salida North or South.

Their use will be limited to 2 groups per day with a maximum of 4 groups per week.

**RMOC** proposes to renew their multi-year commercial SRP for guided bicycle tours in Salida North and Salida South. RMOC has held a permit for over 5 years with a satisfactory compliance record. Historically RMOC has less than 10 bicycle trips per year. This trend is anticipated to continue and will be monitored for changes.

Coordination of groups between commercial permit holders could be required if determined necessary by BLM to better disperse commercial activities on the trail system. Use limits could be placed on all commercial permits in the future.

Group size for all commercial operations is limited to 10 clients including at least one guide.

**Competitive Applicant:**

**Banana Belt** proposes to conduct a competitive mountain bike race in September in the Salida South area. The event had been held through a joint Forest Service permit for 19 years and stopped in 2009. The Proposed Action would issue a one year SRP for the event. The anticipated number of participants is approximately 150. Staging will not occur on BLM lands.

Competitive event organizers must submit a map of the race route annually to the BLM. Once approved, the route can only be changed with approval of a BLM authorized officer. The competitive event organizers are responsible for keeping participants on designated trails and roads. During the event, race organizer will provide on-the-ground staff monitors to ensure that participant and spectator use is confined to areas authorized by permit. Spectator areas must be flagged as closed in areas where safety is a concern.

The BLM authorized officer reserves the right to postpone or cancel the event if environmental conditions develop in which the event would subject the land to substantial resource damage or the public to unacceptable risk—factors such as heavy rains, flooding, early thawing, etc.

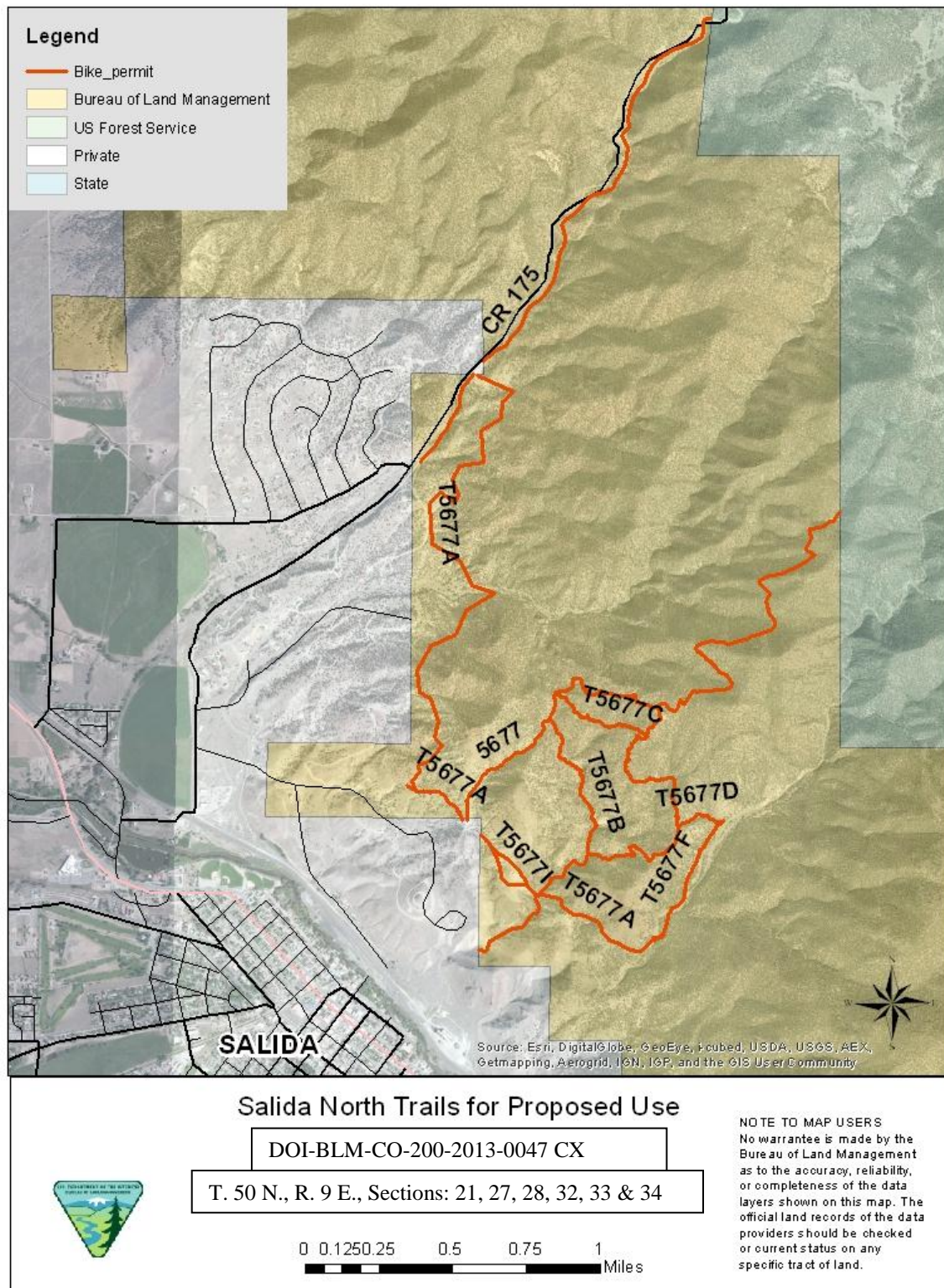
Competitive event organizers are responsible for removing flagging and course markings after the event. Race organizers are responsible for removing trash and debris from the routes. Generators and sound systems will be placed in locations where sound is minimized.

The Proposed Action would only authorize use on BLM public land. If any of the above activities extend onto land owned by other entities, the applicants are responsible for obtaining signed agreements or permits with USDA Forest Service, Chaffee County, City of Salida, Union Pacific, and/or private property owners, as applicable.

Authority to issue SRP's is found in BLM Handbook H-2930-1 and 43 CFR Part 2930. Issuing an SRP is a discretionary action with final approval by the authorized officer. Applications may be denied based upon factors such as non-compliance with land use plans or designations; a moratorium on permits issued as part of a planning process; the results of an environmental analysis; other resource values; an allocation system; public health and safety concerns; applicant's past performance; or the inability of the managing office to issue, manage, and monitor the proposed use.

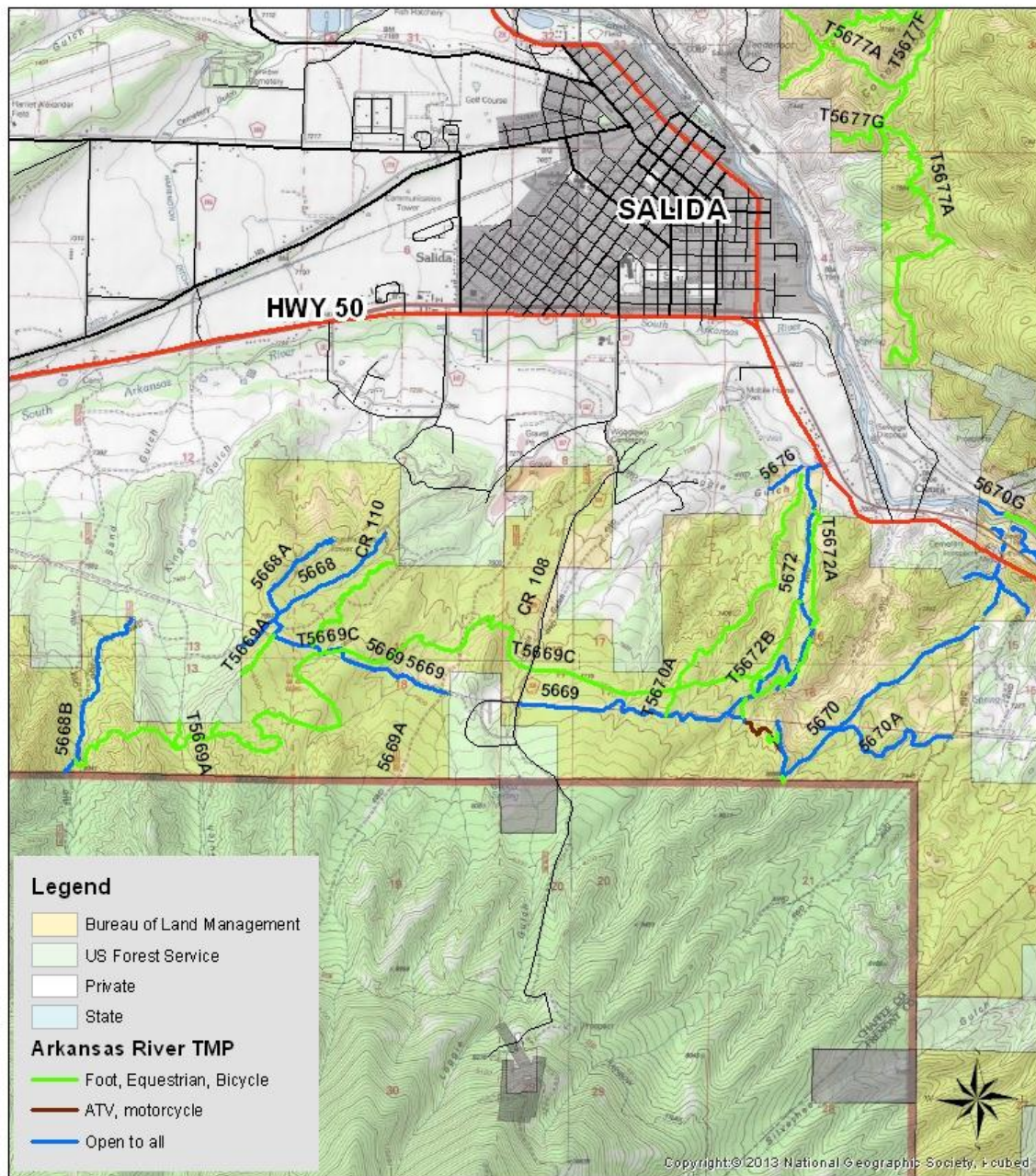
**Public Scoping** was done to determine the effect of increased use in the area. Eighteen comments were received supporting increased use. There were no concerns associated with the addition of a one day competitive race held in the shoulder season. Some concerns were raised that limits should be set on commercial guided group size. The group size was addressed above and will be outlined in the SRP stipulations. Capacity will be monitored with the assistance of Salida Mountain Trails. The use will be re-evaluated next year.

**Map 1. Map of trails North of Salida for Proposed Action**





**Map 2. Map of trails South of Salida (Methodist Mountain) for Proposed Action**



**Salida South (Methodist Mountain) Trails for Proposed Use  
are south of Hwy 50 and shown in Blue or Green**

T. 49 N., R. 9 E., Sections: 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, & 18;  
T. 49 N., R. 8 E., Section 13



0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 Miles

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**NOTE TO MAP USERS**  
No warrantee is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map. The official land records of the data providers should be checked or current status on any specific tract of land.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: 5/13/1996

Decision Number: 1-82

Decision Language:

1-82: Recreation will be managed to provide for: a variety of recreational opportunities and settings; additional opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, off-highway vehicle use, interpretation, and horseback riding; facility development will be accomplished to reduce user conflicts and to improve visitor health and safety.

Name of Plan: Arkansas River Travel Management Plan

Date Approved: 4/29/08

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11.9H (1). None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant		X

impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 3/15/2013
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 3/11/13
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	-----
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Weeds	JL, 03/12/2013
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 3/11/13
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 3/15/13
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	-----
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 3/14/13
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	TW, 3/11/13
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 3/11/13
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	KL, 3/12/2013
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	-----
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 3/8/13
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Noise, SocioEconomics	mw, 3/11/13
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 4/9/13
Vera Matthews	Realty Specialist	Realty	vm, 3/8/2013
Steve Craddock	Realty Specialist	Realty	-----
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	-----
Bob Hurley	Fire Management Officer	Fire	BH, 5/3/2013

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: Multiple cultural resources inventories have been conducted in the area of potential effect, and are summarized in Reports CR-RG-12-96 (P) and CR-RG-13-24 (P). Although cultural resources were found near the area of potential effect, no sites determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were found. Therefore, the proposed project will have no effect on any historic properties (those eligible for the NRHP).

Native American Religious Concerns: No possible traditional cultural properties were located during the cultural resources inventory (see above). There is no other known evidence that suggests the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

Threatened and Endangered Species: There are no records of any federally listed or BLM sensitive species within or near the project area. The Proposed Action will not result in impacts to TES species.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

NAME OF PREPARER: Linda Skinner

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Melissa K.S. Garcia

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

DATE: 5/21/13

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:                      /s/ Keith E. Berger  
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:    5/21/13